

Application No.: 09/806,775

Docket No.: 20386-00294-US

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

1-21. (canceled)

22. (currently amended) The method of claim ~~28~~ 36, wherein said first glass component, said second glass component and said fuel gas are supplied to the flame coaxially.

23. (currently amended) The method of claim 22, wherein said first glass component is silicon or germanium tetrachloride and said second glass component is a solution containing erbium nitrate, water or alcohol, and a form of aluminum which is soluble in water or alcohol, such that multicomponent glass particles can be formed to manufacture active fiber.

24. (currently amended) The method of claim ~~28~~ 36, wherein said first glass component is silicon or germanium tetrachloride and said second glass component is a solution containing erbium nitrate, water or alcohol, and a form of aluminum which is soluble in water or alcohol, such that multicomponent glass particles can be formed to manufacture active fiber.

25-28. (canceled)

29. (currently amended) A method according to claim ~~28~~ 36, wherein said multicomponent glass particles are homogeneous multicomponent particles.

30. (currently amended) A method according to claim ~~28~~ 36, wherein said oxygen participates in production of the flame by reacting with said fuel gas.

31. (canceled)

32. (currently amended) A method according to claim ~~28~~ 36, wherein said atomizing gas is said fuel gas.

33-35 (canceled)

36. (new) A method for forming multicomponent glass particles and spraying the particles to a target, the method comprising:

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supplying a fuel gas through a nozzle of a spraying device to produce a flame;

introducing oxygen to the flame through the nozzle;

introducing a first glass component to the flame through the nozzle such that the first glass component reacts to form first oxide particles, wherein the first glass component is a gaseous or vaporous substance;

introducing a second glass component to a vicinity of the flame, wherein the second glass component comprises a liquid solution containing a rare earth metal;

introducing an atomizing gas to the vicinity of the flame through the nozzle;

atomizing the second glass component with the atomizing gas in the vicinity of the flame so as to form second oxide particles; and

causing the first oxide particles and the second oxide particles to combine with each other so as to form multicomponent glass particles.